

RALPH THE HEIR.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

“I’LL BE A HYPOCRITE IF YOU CHOOSE.”

THERE could hardly be a more unhappy man than was the squire on his journey home. He had buoyed himself up with hope till he had felt certain that he would return to Newton Priory its real and permanent owner, no longer a lodger in the place, as he had called himself to the lawyer, but able to look upon every tree as his own, with power to cut down every oak upon the property; though, as he knew very well, he would rather spill blood from his veins than cut down one of them. But in that case he would preserve the oaks — preserve them by his own decision — because they were his own, and because he could give them to his own son. His son should cut them down if he pleased. And then the power of putting up would be quite as sweet to him as the power of pulling down. What pleasure would he have in making every deficient house upon the estate efficient, when he knew that the stones as he laid them would not become the property of his enemy! He was a man who had never spent his full income. The property had been in his hands now for some fifteen years, and he had already amassed a considerable sum of money — a sum which would have enabled him to buy out his nephew altogether, without selling an acre — presuming the price already fixed

to have been sufficient. He had determined to sell something, knowing that he could not do as he would do with the remainder if his hands were empty. He had settled it all in his mind; how Ralph, his Ralph, must marry, and have a separate income. There would be no doubt about his Ralph’s marriage when once it should be known that his Ralph was the heir to Newton. The bar-sinister

would matter but little then — would be clean forgotten. His mind had been full of all this as he had come up to London. It had all been settled. He had decided upon ignoring altogether those cautions which his son and nephew and lawyer had croaked into his ears. This legitimate heir was a ruined spendthrift, who had no alternative but to raise money, no ambition but to spend money, no pursuit but to waste money.

His temperament was so sanguine that when he entered Mr. Carey’s office he had hardly doubted. Now every thing had been upset, and he was cast down from triumph into an abyss of despondency by two lines from this wretched, meaningless, poor-spirited spendthrift! “I believe he’d take a pleasure in seeing the property going to the dogs, merely to spite me,” said the squire to his son, as soon as he reached home — having probably forgotten his former idea, that his nephew was determined, with the pertinacity of a patient, far-sighted Jew money-lender, to wring from him the last possible shilling.

Ralph, who was not the heir, was of his nature so just, that he could not hear an accusation which he did not believe to be true, without protesting against it. The squire had called the heir a spiritless spendthrift, and a malicious evil-doer, intent upon ruining the estate, and a grasping Jew, all in the same breath.

“I think you are hard upon him, sir,” said the son to the father.



“Sir Thomas,” began Mr. Pabsy, in a soft, greasy voice, “if you will give me three minutes to express myself.”—Chapter XX.

"Of course you think so. At any rate you'll say so," said the squire. "One would suppose I was thinking only of myself to hear you talk."

"I know what you're thinking of," said Ralph, slowly; "and I know how much I owe you."

"I sometimes think that you ought to curse me," said the squire.

After this, at this moment, with such words ringing in his ears, Ralph found it to be impossible to expostulate with his father. He could only take his father's arm, and whisper a soft feminine word or two. He would be as happy as the day was long, if only he could see his father happy.

"I can never be happy till I have placed you where you would have been," said the squire. "The gods are just, and our pleasant vices make instruments to scourge us." He did not quote the line to himself, but the purport of it hung heavy on him. And yet he thought it hard that because he had money in his pocket he could not altogether make himself free of the scourge.

On the following morning he was less vituperative and less unreasonable, but he was still intent upon the subject. After breakfast he got his son into his own room—the room in which he did his magistrate's work, and added up his accounts, and kept his spuds and spurs—and seriously discussed the whole matter. What would it be wise that they should do next? "You don't mean to tell me that you don't wish me to buy it?" said the squire. No; Ralph would not say that. If it were in the market, to be bought, and if the money were forthcoming, of course such a purchase would be expedient. "The money is forthcoming," said the squire. "We can make it up one way or another. What matter if we did sell Brownriggs? What matter if we sold Brownriggs and Twining as well?" Ralph quite acceded to this. As far as buying and selling were concerned, he would have acceded to any thing that would have made his father happy. "I won't say a word against this fellow, since you are so fond of him," continued the squire. Ralph, though his father paused, made no reply to the intended sarcasm. "But you must allow that he had a reason for writing such a letter as he did."

"Of course he had a reason," said Ralph.

"Well; we'll say that he wants to keep it."

"That's not unnatural."

"Not at all. Everybody likes to keep what he's got, and to get as much as he can. That's nature. But a man can't eat his cake and have it. He has been slow to learn that, no doubt; but I suppose he has learned it. He wouldn't have gone to Sir Thomas Underwood, in the way he did, crying to be helped, if he hadn't learned it. Remember, Ralph, I didn't go to him first; he came to me. You always forget that. What was the meaning, then, of Sir Thomas writing to me in that pitiful way, asking me to do something for him—and he who had I don't know how

much, something like eight hundred pounds a year, I take it, the day he came of age?"

"Of course he has been imprudent."

"He cannot eat his cake and have it. He wants to eat it, and I want to have it. I am sure it may be managed. I suppose you mean to go up and see him?"

"See Ralph?"

"Why not? You are not afraid of him." The son smiled, but made no answer. "You might find out from him what it is he really wants—what he will really do. Those attorneys don't understand. Carey isn't a bad fellow, and, as for honesty, I'd trust him with any thing. I've known him and his father all my life, and in any ordinary piece of business there is no one whose opinion I would take so soon. But he talks of my waiting, telling me that the thing will come round after a few years—as if what one wanted was merely an investment for one's money. It isn't that."

"No, sir; it isn't that."

"Not that at all. It's the feeling of the thing. Your lawyer may be the best man in the world to lay out your money in a speculation, but he doesn't dare to buy contentment for you. He doesn't see it, and one hardly dares to try and make him see it. I'd give the half of it all to have the other half, but I cannot tell him that. I'd give one half so long as that fellow wasn't to be the owner of the other. We'll have no opposition Newton in the place."

The squire's son was, of course, willing enough to go up to London. He would see the heir at any rate, and endeavor to learn what were the wishes of the heir. "You may say what money you like," said the squire. "I hardly care what I pay, so long as it is possible to pay it. Go up to ten thousand pounds more, if that will do it."

"I don't think I can bargain," said the son.

"But he can," said the father. "At any rate, you can find out whether he will name a price. I'd go myself, but I know I should quarrel with him."

Ralph prepared himself for the journey, and, as a matter of course, took the parson into his confidence; not telling the parson any thing of the absolute sum named, but explaining that it was his purpose to become acquainted with the heir, and, if possible, to learn his views. "You'll find Ralph a very different fellow from what my uncle thinks him," said the parson. "I shall be much mistaken if he does not tell you quite openly what he intends. He is careless about money, but he never was greedy." And then they got to other matters. "You will, of course, see the girls at Fulham?" said the parson.

"Yes, I shall manage to get down there."

The story of Gregory's passion for Clarissa was well known to the other. Gregory, who would not for worlds have spoken of such a matter among his general acquaintance, who could not have brought himself to mention it in the presence of two hearers, had told it all to the one companion who was nearest and dearest to him. "I wish I were going with you," said the parson.

"Why not come with me, then?"

"And yet I don't wish it. If I were in London, I doubt whether I would go there. There could be no use in it."

"It is one of those things," said Ralph, "in which a man should never despair as long as there is a possibility."

"Ah, yes; people say so. I don't believe in that kind of perseverance myself—at any rate, not with her. She knows her own mind as well as I know mine. I think I promised her that I would trouble her no more."

"Promises like that are mere pie-crusts," said Ralph.

"Give her my love—that's all. And don't do that unless you are alone with her. I shall live it down some day, no doubt; but, to tell the truth, I have made up my mind not to marry. I'm half inclined to think that a clergyman shouldn't marry. There are some things which our ancestors understood pretty well, although we think they were such fools. I should like to see the new cousin, certainly."

Ralph said nothing more about the new cousin; and was perhaps hardly aware how greatly the idea of again seeing the new cousin had enhanced the pleasure of his journey to London. About a week after this he started, having devoted nearly all the afternoon before he went to the packing of a large basket of ferns, to each root or small bundle of which was appended a long name in Latin, as an offering to Patience Underwood. And yet he did not care very much for Patience Underwood.

It was just the end of September—the last day of September, when he reached London. Ralph the heir was out of town, and the servant at his lodging professed she did not know where he was. She thought it probable that he was "at Mr. Orsball's—Mr. Orsball of the Moonbeam, Barnfield—a looking after his 'orses." She suggested this, not from any knowledge in her possession, but because Ralph was always believed to go to the Moonbeam when he left town. He would, however, be back next week. His namesake, therefore, did not consider that it would be expedient for him to follow the heir down to the Moonbeam.

But the Underwood girls would certainly be at Fulham, and he started at once with his ferns for Popham Villa. He found them at home, and, singular to say, he found Sir Thomas there also. On the very next morning Sir Thomas was to start for Percycross, to commence the actual work of his canvass. The canvass was to occupy a fortnight, and on Monday the sixteenth the candidates were to be nominated. Tuesday the seventeenth was the day of the election. The whole household was so full of the subject that at first there was hardly room for the ferns. "Oh, Mr. Newton, we are so much obliged to you. Papa is going to stand for Percycross." That, or nearly that, was the form in which the ferns were received. Newton was quite contented. An excuse for entering the house was what he had wanted, and his excuse was deemed ample. Sir Thomas, who was dis-

posed to be very civil to the stranger, had not much to say about his own prospects. To a certain degree he was ashamed of Percycross, and had said very little about it even to Stamm since his personal acquaintance had been made with Messrs. Spiveycomb, Pile, and Pababy. But the girls were not ashamed of Percycross. To them as yet Percycross was the noblest of all British boroughs. Had not the Conservatives of Percycross chosen their father to be their representative out of all British subjects? Sir Thomas had tried, but had tried quite in vain, to make them understand the real fashion of the selection. If Percycross would only send him to Parliament, Percycross should be divine. "What d'you think?" said Clary; "there's a man of the name of —. I wish you'd guess the name of this man who is going to stand against papa, Mr. Newton."

"The name won't make much difference," said Sir Thomas.

"Ontario Moggs!" said Clary. "Do you think it possible, Mr. Newton, that Percycross—the town where one of the Percys set up a cross in the time of the Crusaders—didn't he, papa?"

"I shall not consider myself bound to learn all that unless they elect me," said Sir Thomas; "but I don't think there were Percys in the days of the Crusaders."

"At any rate, the proper name is Percy St. Cross," said Clary. "Could such a borough choose Ontario Moggs to be one of its members, Mr. Newton?"

"I do like the name," said Mary Bonner.

"Perhaps papa and Ontario Moggs may be the two members," said Clary, laughing. "If so, you must bring him down here, papa. Only he's a shoemaker."

"That makes no difference in these days," said Sir Thomas.

The ferns were at last unpacked, and the three girls were profuse in their thanks. Who does not know how large a space a basket of ferns will cover when it is unpacked, and how large the treasure looms? "They'll cover the rocks on the other side," said Mary. It seemed to Newton that Mary Bonner was more at home than she had been when he had seen her before, spoke more freely of what concerned the house, and was beginning to become one of the family. But still she was, as it were, overshadowed by Clarissa.

In appearance, indeed, she was the queen among the three, but in active social life she did not compete with Clary. Patience stood as a statue on a pedestal, by no means unobserved and ignored; beautiful in form, but colorless. Newton, as he looked at the three, wondered that a man so quiet and gentle as the young parson, should have chosen such a love as Clary Underwood. He remained half the day at the villa, dining there at the invitation of Sir Thomas. "My last dinner," said Sir Thomas, "unless I am lucky enough to be rejected. Men when they are canvassing never dine—and not often after they're elected."

The guest had not much opportunity of ingratiating himself specially with the beau-

ty; but the beauty did so far ingratiate herself with him—unconsciously on her part—that he half resolved that should her father be successful in his present enterprise, he would ask Mary Bonner to be the queen of Newton Priory. His father had often urged him to marry—never suggesting that any other quality beyond good looks would be required in his son's wife. He had never spoken of money, or birth, or name. "I have an idea," he had said, laughing, "that you'll marry a fright some day. I own I should like to have a pretty woman about the house. One doesn't expect much from a woman, but she is bound to be pretty." This woman was at any rate pretty. Pretty, indeed! Was it possible that any woman should be framed more lovely than this one? But he must bide his time. He would not ask any girl to marry him till he should know what position he could ask her to fill. But though he spoke little to Mary, he treated her as men do treat women whom they desire to be allowed to love. There was a tone in his voice, a worship in his eye, and a flush upon his face, and a hesitation in his manner, which told the story, at any rate to one of the party there. "He didn't come to bring you the ferns," said Clarissa to Patience.

"He brought them for all of us," said Patience.

"Young men don't go about with ferns for the sake of the ferns," said Clary. "They were merely an excuse to come and see Mary."

"Why shouldn't he come and see Mary?"

"He has my leave, Patty. I think it would be excellent. Isn't it odd that there should be two Ralph Newtons? One would be Mrs. Newton and the other Mrs. Ralph."

"Clarissa, Clarissa!" said Patience, almost in a tone of agony.

"I'll be a hypocrite if you choose, Patty," said Clarissa, "or I'll be true. But you can't have me both at once." Patience said nothing further then. The lesson of self-restraint which she desired to teach was very hard of teaching.

There was just a word spoken between Sir Thomas and Newton about the property. "I intend to see Ralph Newton, if I can find him," said Ralph who was not the heir.

"I don't think he is far from town," said Sir Thomas.

"My father thinks that we might come to an understanding."

"Perhaps so," said Sir Thomas.

"I have no strong anxiety on the subject myself," said Newton; "but my father thinks that if he does wish to sell his reversion—"

"He doesn't wish it. How can a man wish it?"

"Under the circumstances it may be desirable."

"You had better see him, and I think he will tell you," said Sir Thomas. "You must understand that a man thinks much of such a position. Pray come to us again. We shall always be glad to see you when you are in town."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"I FIND I MUST."

RALPH the heir had, after all, gone to Margate. Mr. Neeft had got such a hold upon him that he had no help for it. He found himself forced to go to Margate. When he was asked the second and third time, with all the energy of Mr. Neeft's eloquence, he was unable to resist. What reason could he give that he should not go to Margate, seeing that it was a thing quite understood that he was to endeavor to persuade Polly to be his wife? Neeft came to him two mornings running, catching him each morning just as he was smoking his cigar after breakfast, and was very eloquent. He already owed Mr. Neeft over five hundred pounds, and the debt on the first of these mornings was made up to one thousand pounds, a receipt being given for the shop debt on one side, and a bond for the whole money, with five per cent. interest, being taken in return for it. "You'd better pay off what little things you owe, captain," said the generous breeches-maker, "and then, when the time comes, we'll settle with the gent about the 'orses." Neeft played his game very well. He said not a word about selling the horses, or as to any restriction on his young "captain's" amusements. If you pull at your fish too hard, you only break your line. Neeft had a very fine fish on his hook, and he meant to land it. Not a word was said about Margate on that occasion, till the little pecuniary transaction was completed. Then the captain was informed that the Neeft family would certainly spend the next week at that marine paradise, and that Polly expected "the captain's" company. "Them's the places," said Neeft, "where a girl grows soft as butter." This he said when the door-handle was in his hand, so that "the captain" had no chance of answering him. Then he came again the next morning, and returned to the subject as though "the captain" had already consented. There was a near approach to anger on one side and determined opposition on the other during this interview, but it ended in acquiescence on the captain's side. Then Mr. Neeft was once more as gracious as possible. The graciousness of such men in acknowledging their own inferiority is sometimes wonderful. "You needn't be seen about with me, you know," said Mr. Neeft. This was said after Ralph had positively declared that he would not go actually with the Neefts and occupy the same apartments. "It would be altogether wrong—for Polly's sake," said Ralph, looking very wise and very moral. To this view Neeft assented, not being quite sure how far "the captain" might be correct in his ideas of morality.

"They've been and fixed young Newton for Polly," said Mr. Waddle that morning, to his friend Herr Bawwah, when he was told to mark off Ralph's account in the books as settled. "Dashed if they 'aven't," the German grunted. "Old Neverfit's a-playing at 'igh game, ain't he?" Such was the most unde-

served nickname by which this excellent tradesman was known in his own establishment. "I don't see nodin about 'igh," said the German. "He ain't got no money. I call it low." Waddle endeavoured to explain the circumstances, but failed. "De peoples should be de peoples, and de nobles should be de nobles," said Herr Bawwah—a doctrine which was again unintelligible to Mr. Waddle.

Ralph having overcome an intense desire to throw over his engagement, to sell his horses, and to start for Jerusalem, did go down to Margate. He put himself up at an hotel there, ate his dinner, lighted a cigar, and went down upon the sands. It was growing dusk, and he thought that he should be alone—or, at least, uninterrupted in a crowd. The crowd was there, and nobody in the place would know him—except the Neefts. He had not been on the sands two minutes before he encountered Mr. Neeft and his daughter. The breeches-maker talked loud, and was extremely happy. Polly smiled, and was very pretty. In two minutes Neeft saw, or pretended to see, a friend, and Ralph was left with his lady-love. There never was so good-natured a father! "You'll bring her home to tea, captain," said the father, as he walked off.

On that occasion, Ralph abstained from all direct love-making, and Polly, when she found that it was to be so, made herself very pleasant. "The idea of your being at Margate, Mr. Newton," said Polly.

"Why not I, as well as another?"

"Oh, I don't know. Brighton or some of those French places, or anywhere all about the world, would be more likely for you, I should think."

"Margate seems to be very jolly."

"Oh, I like it. But then we are not swells, you know. Have you heard the news? Ontario Moggs is going to stand to be 'member of Parliament' for Pereyrossa."

"My rival!" That was the only word he uttered approaching to the subject of love.

"I don't know any thing about that, Mr. Newton. But it's true."

"Why, Sir Thomas Underwood is going to stand."

"I don't know any thing about anybody else, but Ontario Moggs is going to stand. I do so hope he'll get in! They say he speaks quite beautiful. Did you ever hear him?"

"I never heard him."

"Ah, you may laugh. But a bootmaker can make a speech sometimes as well as—as well as a peer of Parliament. Father says that old Mr. Moggs has given him ever so much money to do it. When a man is in Parliament, Mr. Newton, doesn't that make him a gentleman?"

"No."

"What then?"

"Nothing on earth can make a man a gentleman. You don't understand Latin, Polly?"

"No. I hope that isn't necessary for a young woman."

"By no means. But a poet is born, and can't be made."

"I'm not talking of poets. Ontario Moggs

is a poet. But I know what you mean. There's something better even than to be a gentleman."

"One may be an angel—as you are, Polly."

"Oh—me; I'm not thinking of myself."

I'm thinking of Ontario Moggs—going into Parliament. But then he is so clever!"

Ralph was not minded to be cut out by Moggs, junior, after coming all the way to Margate after his lady-love. The thing was to be done, and he would do it. But not to-night. Then he took Polly home, and ate prawns with Mr. and Mrs. Neeft. On the next day they all went out together in a boat.

The week was nearly over, and Ralph had renewed his suit more than once, when the breeches-maker proceeded to "put him through his facings." "She's a-coming round, ain't she, captain?" said Mr. Neeft. By this time Ralph hated the sight of Neeft so thoroughly, that he was hardly able to repress the feeling. Indeed, he did not repress it. Whether Neeft did not see it, or seeing it chose to ignore the matter, cannot be said. He was, at any rate, as courteous as ever. Mrs. Neeft, overcome partly by her husband's authority, and partly induced to believe that as Ontario Moggs was going into Parliament he was no longer to be regarded as a possible husband, had yielded, and was most polite to the lover. When he came in of an evening, she always gave him a double allowance of prawns, and hoped that the tea was to his liking. But she said very little more than this, standing somewhat in awe of him. Polly had been changeable, consenting to walk with him every day, but always staving the matter off when he asked her whether she thought that she yet knew him well enough to be his wife. "Oh, not half well enough," she would say. "And then, perhaps, you know, I'm not over-fond of the half that I do know." And so it was up to the last evening, when the father put him through his facings. In respect of "the captain's" behavior to Polly, the father had no just ground of complaint, for Ralph had done his best. Indeed, Ralph was fond enough of Polly. And it was hard for a man to be much with her without becoming fond of her. "She's a-coming round, ain't she, captain?" said Mr. Neeft.

"I can't say that she is," said Ralph, turning upon his heel near the end of the pier.

"You don't stick to her fast enough, captain."

This was not to be borne. "I'll tell you what it is, Mr. Neeft," said Ralph, "you'd better let me alone, or else I shall be off."

"You'd only have to come back, captain, you know," said Neeft. "Not as I want to interfere. You're on the square, I see that. As long as you're on the square, there ain't nothing I won't do. I ain't a-blaming you—only stick to her." "Damn it all!" said Ralph, turning round again in the other direction. But there was Neeft still confronting him. "Only stick to her, captain, and we'll pull through. I'll put her through her facings to-night. She's thinking of that orkard lout of a fellow just because he's standing to be a Parliament gent." This did not improve

matters, and Ralph absolutely ran away—ran away, and escaped to his hotel. He would try again in the morning, would still make her his wife if she would have him! And then swore a solemn oath that in such case he would never see his father-in-law again.

Polly was not at all averse to giving him opportunities. They were together on the sands on the next morning, and he then asked her very seriously whether she did not think that there had been enough of this, that they might make up their minds to love each other, and be married as it were out of hand. Her father and mother wished it, and what was there against it? "You cannot doubt that I am in earnest now, Polly?" he said.

"I know you are in earnest well enough," she answered.

"And you do not doubt that I love you?"

"I doubt very much whether you love father," said Polly. She spoke this so sharp and quickly that he had no reply ready. "If you and I were to be married, where should we live? I should want to have father and mother with me. You'd mean that, I suppose?" The girl had read his thoughts, and he hadn't a word to say for himself. "The truth is, you despise father, Mr. Newton."

"No, indeed."

"Yes, you do. I can see it. And perhaps it's all right that you should. I'm not saying—of course, he's not like you and your people. How should he be? Only I'm thinking, like should marry like."

"Polly, you're fit for any position in which a man could place you."

"No, I'm not. I'm not fit for any place as father wouldn't be fit for too. I'd make a better hand at it than father, I dare say—because I'm younger. But I won't go anywhere where folk is to be ashamed of father. I'd like to be a lady well enough; but it'd go against the very grain of my heart if I had a house and he wasn't to be made welcome to the best of every thing."

"Polly, you're an angel!"

"I'm a young woman who knows who's been good to me. He's to give me pretty nigh every thing. You wouldn't be taking me if it wasn't for that. And then, after all, I'm to turn my back on him because he ain't like your people. No; never—Mr. Newton! You're well enough, Mr. Newton; more than good enough for me, no doubt. But I won't do it. I'd cut my heart out if I was turning my back upon father." She had spoken out with a vengeance, and Ralph didn't know that there was any more to be said. He couldn't bring himself to assure her that Mr. Neeft would be a welcome guest in his house. At this moment the breeches-maker was so personally distasteful to him that he had not force enough in him to tell a lie upon the matter. They were now at the entrance of the pier, at which their ways would separate. "Good-by, Mr. Newton," said she. "There had better be an end of it—hadn't there?" "Good-by, Polly," he said, pressing her hand as he left her.

Polly walked up home with a quick step, with a tear in her eye, and with grave thoughts

in her heart. It would have been very nice. She could have loved him, and she felt the attraction, and the softness, and the sweet-smelling delicateness of gentle associations. It would have been very nice. But she could not sever herself from her father. She could understand that he must be distasteful to such a man as Ralph Newton. She would not blame Ralph. But the fact that it was so, shut for her the door of that Elysium. She knew that she could not be happy were she to be taken to such a mode of life as would force her to accuse herself of ingratitude to her father. And so Ralph went back to town without again seeing the breeches-maker.

The first thing he found in his lodgings was a note from his namesake.

"DEAR SIR:

"I am up in town, and am very anxious to see you in respect of the arrangements which have been proposed respecting the property. Will you fix a meeting as soon as you are back? Yours always,

"RALPH NEWTON.

"Charing Cross Hotel, 2 Oct., 186-."

Of course he would see his namesake. Why not? And why not take his uncle's money, and pay off Neeft, and have done with it? Neeft must be paid off, let the money come from where it would. He called at the hotel, and not finding his cousin, left a note asking him to breakfast on the following morning; and then he spent the remainder of that day in renewed doubt. He was so sick of Neeft—whose manner of eating shrimps had been a great offence added to other offences! And yet one of his great sorrows was that he should lose Polly. Polly in her way was perfect, and he felt almost sure, now, that Polly loved him. Girls had no right to cling to their fathers after marriage. There was Scripture warranty against it. And yet the manner in which she had spoken of her father had greatly added to his admiration.

The two Ralphs breakfasted together, not having met each other since they were children, and having even then scarcely known each other. Ralph the heir had been brought up a boy at the parsonage of Newton Peele, but the other Ralph had never been taken to Newton till after his grandfather's death. The late parson had died within twelve months of his father—a wretched year, during which the squire and the parson had always squabbled—and then Ralph who was the heir had been transferred to the guardianship of Sir Thomas Underwood. It was only during the holidays of that one year that the two Ralphs had been together. The "Dear Sir" will probably be understood by the discerning reader. The squire's son had never allowed himself to call even Gregory his cousin. Ralph the heir in writing back had addressed him as "Dear Ralph." The squire's son thought that that was very well, but chose that any such term of familiarity should come first from him who was in truth a New-

ton. He felt his condition, though he was accustomed to make so light of it to his father.

The two young men shook hands together cordially, and were soon at work upon their eggs and kidneys. They immediately began about Gregory, and the parsonage, and the church, and the big house. The heir to the property, though he had not been at Newton for fourteen years, remembered well its slopes, and lawns, and knolls, and little valleys. He asked after this tree and that, of this old man and that old woman, of the game, and the river fishery, and the fox coverts, and the others, of which three or four were reputed to be left when he was there. Otters it seems were gone, but the foxes were there in plenty. "My father would be half mad if they drew the place blank," said the squire's son.

"Does my uncle hunt much?"

"Every Monday and Saturday, and very often on the Wednesday."

"And you?"

"I call myself a three-day man, but I often make a fourth. Garth must be very far off if he don't see me. I don't do much with any other pack."

"Does my uncle ride?"

"Yes; he goes pretty well—he says he don't. If he gets well away, I think he rides as hard as ever he did. He don't like a stern-chase."

"No more do I," said Ralph the heir. "But I'm often driven to make it. What can a fellow do? An old chap turns round and goes home, and doesn't feel ashamed of himself; but we can't do that. That's the time when one ruins his horses." Then he told all about the Moonbeam and the B & B, and his own stud. The morning was half gone, and not a word had been said about business.

The squire's son felt that it was so, and rushed at the subject all in a hurry. "I told you what I have come up to town about."

"Oh, yes; I understand."

"I suppose I may speak plainly," said the squire's son.

"Why not?" said Ralph the heir.

"Well; I don't know. Of course it's best. You wrote to Carey, you know."

"Yes; I wrote the very moment I had made up my mind."

"You had made up your mind, then?"

Ralph had certainly made up his mind when he wrote the letter of which they were speaking, but he was by no means sure but that his mind was not made up now in another direction. Since he had become so closely intimate with Mr. Neeft, and since Polly had so clearly explained to him her ideas as to paternal duty, his mind had veered round many points. "Yes," said he. "I had made up my mind."

"I don't suppose it can be of any use for you and me to be bargaining together," said the other Ralph.

"Not in the least."

"Of course it's a great thing to be heir to Newton. It's a nice property, and all that. Only my father thought—"

"He thought that I wanted money," said Ralph the heir.

"Just that."

"So I do. God knows I do. I would tell you every thing. I would indeed. As to screwing a hard bargain, I'm the last man in London who would do it. I thought that your father might be willing to buy half the property."

"He won't do that. You see the great thing is the house and park. We should both want that—shouldn't we? Of course it must be yours; and I feel—I don't know how I feel—in asking you whether you want to sell it."

"You needn't mind that, Ralph."

"If you don't think the sum the lawyers and those chaps fixed is enough—"

Then Ralph the heir, interrupting him, rose from his chair and spoke out: "My uncle has never understood me, and never will. He thinks hardly of me, and if he chooses to do so, I can't help it. He hasn't seen me for fourteen years, and of course he is entitled to think what he pleases. If he would have seen me, the thing might have been easier."

"Don't let us go back to that, Ralph," said the squire's son.

"I don't want to go back to any thing. When it comes to a fellow's parting with such prospects as mine, it does come very hard upon him. Of course it's my own fault. I might have got along well enough—only I haven't. I am hard up for money—very hard up. And yet—if you were in my place, you wouldn't like to part with it."

"Perhaps not," said the squire's son, not knowing what to say.

"As to bargaining, and asking so much more, and all the rest of it, that's out of the question. Somebody fixed a price, and I suppose he knew what he was at."

"That was a minimum price."

"I understand. It was all fair, I don't doubt. It didn't seem a great deal; but your father might live for thirty years."

"I hope he will," said the squire's son.

"As for standing off for more money, I never dreamed of such a thing. If your father thinks that, he has wronged me. But I believe he always does wrong me. And about the building, and the trees, and the leases, and the house, he might do just as he pleased for me. I have never said a word, and never shall. I must say I sometimes think he has been hard upon me. In fourteen years he has never asked me to set my foot upon the estate, that I might see the place which must one day be mine."

This was an accusation which the squire's son found it very difficult to answer. It could not be answered without a reference to his own birth, and it was almost impossible that he should explain his father's feelings on the subject. "If this were settled, we should be glad that you would come," he said.

"Yes," said Ralph the heir; "yes—if I consented to give up every thing that is mine by right. Do you think that a fellow can bring himself to abandon all that so easily? It's like tearing a fellow's heart out of him."

If I'll do that, my uncle will let me come and see what it is that I have lost! That which would induce him to welcome me would make it impossible that I should go there. It may be that I shall sell it. I suppose I shall. But I will never look at it afterward." As it came to this point, the tears were streaming down his cheeks, and the eyes of the other Ralph were not dry.

"I wish it could be made pleasant for us all," said the squire's son. The wish was well enough, but the expression of it was hardly needed, because it must be so general.

"But all this is rot and nonsense," said Ralph the heir, brushing the tears away from his eyes, "and I am only making an ass of myself. Your father wants to know whether I will sell the reversion to Newton Priory. I will. I find I must. I don't know whether I wouldn't sooner cut my throat; but unless I cut my throat I must sell it. I had a means of escape, but that has gone by. When I wrote that letter there was a means of escape. Now there's none."

"Ralph," said the other.

"Well; speak on. I've about said all I've got to say. Only don't think I want to ballyrag about the money. That's right enough, no doubt. If there's more to come, the people that have to look to it will say so. I'm not going to be a Jew about it."

"Ralph; I wouldn't do any thing in a hurry. I won't take your answer in a hurry like this."

"It's no good, my dear fellow. I must do it. I must have five thousand pounds at once."

"You can get that from an insurance office."

"And then I should have nothing to live on. I must do it. I have no way out of it—except cutting my throat."

The squire's son paused a moment, thinking. "I was told by my father," said he, "to offer you more money."

"If it's worth more the people will say so," said Ralph the heir, impetuously; "I do not want to sell it for more than it's worth. Ask them to settle it immediately. There are people I must pay money to at once."

And so the squire's son had done the squire's errand. When he reported his success to Mr. Carey, that gentleman asked him whether he had the heir's consent in writing. At this the successful buyer was almost disposed to be angry; but Mr. Carey softened him by an acknowledgment that he had done more than could have been expected. "I'll see his lawyer to-morrow," said Mr. Carey, "and then, unless he changes his mind again, we'll soon have it settled." After that the triumphant negotiator sent a telegram home to his father, "It is settled, and the purchase is made."

CHAPTER XXV.

"MR. GRIFFENBOTTOM."

On Monday, the 16th of October, Sir Thomas Underwood went down to Percy-

cross, and the first information given him was that Mr. Westmacott and Ontario Moggs had arrived on the Saturday, and were already at work. Mr. Griffenbottom was expected early on the Tuesday. "They've stolen a march on us, then," said Sir Thomas to Mr. Trigger.

"Give 'em rope enough, and they'll hang themselves," replied the managing agent.

"There was Moggs spouting to them on his own hook on Saturday night, and Westmacott's chaps are ready to eat him. And he wanted to be doing it yesterday, Sunday; only some of them got a hold of him and wouldn't let him loose. Moggs is a great card for us, Sir Thomas. There's nothing like one of them spouting fellows to overset the coach."

"Mr. Westmacott is fond of that, too," said Sir Thomas.

"He understands. He's used to it. He does it in the proper place. Westmacott wasn't a bad member for the place—wasn't, perhaps, quite free enough with his money, but Westmacott was very decent." Sir Thomas could not help feeling that Trigger spoke of it as though he wished that the two old members might be returned. Ah, well! had it been possible, Mr. Trigger would have wished it. Mr. Trigger understood the borough, knew well the rocks before them, and would have wished it—although he had been so imperative with Mr. Griffenbottom as to the second Conservative candidate. And now Mr. Griffenbottom had sent them a man who would throw all the fat in the fire by talking of purity of election! "And Moggs has been making a fool of himself in another direction," said Trigger, thinking that no opportunity for giving a valuable hint should be lost. "He's been telling the working-men already that they'll be scoundrels and knaves if they take so much as a glass of beer without paying for it."

"Scoundrel is a strong word," said Sir Thomas, "but I like him for that."

"Percycross won't like him. Men would rather have all that left to their own feelings. They who want beer or money certainly won't thank him; and they who don't want it don't like to be suspected."

"Every one will take it as addressed to his neighbor and not to himself."

"We are very fond of our neighbors here, Sir Thomas, and that kind of thing won't go down." This was on the evening of the candidate's arrival, and the conversation was going on absolutely while Sir Thomas was eating his dinner. He had asked Mr. Trigger to join him, and Mr. Trigger had faintly alleged that he had dined at three; but he soon so far changed his mind as to be able to express an opinion that he could "pick a bit," and he did pick a bit. After which he drank the best part of a bottle of port—having assured Sir Thomas that the port at the Percy Standard was a sort of wine one didn't get every day. And as he drank his port, he continued to pour in lessons of wisdom. Sir Thomas employed his mind the while in wondering when Mr. Trigger would go away, and forecasting whether Mr. Trigger would desire

to drink port-wine at the Percy Standard every evening during the process of canvassing. About nine o'clock the waiter announced that a few gentlemen below desired to see Sir Thomas. "Our friends," said Mr. Trigger. "Just put chairs, and bring a couple of bottles of port, John. I'm glad they're come, Sir Thomas, because it shows that they mean to take to you." Up they were shown, Messrs. Spiveycomb, Spicer, Pile, Roodylands—the bootmaker who has not yet been named—Pabsby, and seven or eight others. Sir Thomas shook hands with them all. He observed that Mr. Trigger was especially cordial in his treatment of Spicer, the mustard-maker—as to whose defection he had been so fearful in consequence of certain power which Mr. Westmacott might have in the wholesale disposal of mustard. "I hope you find yourself better," said Mr. Pile, opening the conversation. Sir Thomas assured his new friend that he was pretty well. "Cause you seemed rayther down on your luck when you was here before," said Mr. Pile.

"No need for that," said Spicer, the man of mustard. "Is there, Trigger?" Trigger sat a little apart, with one bottle of port-wine at his elbow, and took no part in the conversation. He was aware that his opportunities were so great that the outside supporters ought to have their time. "Any objection to this, Sir Thomas?" he said, taking a cigar-case out of his pocket. Sir Thomas, who hated tobacco, of course gave permission. Trigger rang the bell, ordered cigars for the party, and then sat apart with his port-wine. In ten minutes Sir Thomas hardly knew where he was, so dense was the cloud of smoke.

"Sir Thomas," began Mr. Pabsby—"if I could only clearly see my way—"

"You'll see it clear enough before nomination-day," said Mr. Pile.

"Any ways, after election," said a conservative grocer. Both these gentlemen belonged to the Established Church and delighted in snubbing Mr. Pabsby. Indeed, Mr. Pabsby had no business at this meeting, and so he had been told very plainly by one or two as he had joined them in the street. He explained, however, that his friend Sir Thomas had come to him the very first person in Percycross, and he carried his point in joining the party. But he was a mild man, and when he was interrupted he merely bided another opportunity.

"I hope, Sir Thomas, your mind is made up to do something for our trade," said Mr. Roodylands.

"What's the matter with your trade?" said Spiveycomb, the paper-maker.

"Well—we ain't got no jobs in it—that's the matter," said Mr. Pile.

"As for jobs, what's the odds?" said a big and burly loud-mouthed tanner. "All on us likes a good thing when it comes in our way. Stow that, and don't let's be told about jobs. Sir Thomas, here's your health, and I wish you at the top of the poll—that is, next to Mr. Griffenbottom." Then they all drank to Sir Thomas's health, Mr. Pabsby filling himself a bumper for the occasion.

It was eleven before they went away, at which time Mr. Pabsby had three times got as far as a declaration of his wish to see things clearly. Farther than this he could not get; but still he went away in perfect good-humor. He would have another opportunity, as he took occasion to whisper when he shook hands with the candidate. Trigger stayed even yet for half an hour. "Don't waste your time on that fellow, Pabsby," he said. "No, I won't," said Sir Thomas. "And be very civil to old Pile." "He doesn't seem disposed to return the compliment," said Sir Thomas. "But he doesn't want your interest in the borough," said Trigger, with the air of a man who had great truths to teach. "In electioneering, Sir Thomas, it's mostly the same as in other matters. Nothing's to be had for nothing. If you were a retail seller of boots from Manchester, old Pile would be civil enough to you. You may snub Spicer as much as you please, because he'll expect to get something out of you." "He'll be very much deceived," said Sir Thomas. "I'm not so sure of that," said Trigger; "Spicer knows what he's about, pretty well." Then, at last, Mr. Trigger went, assuring Sir Thomas most enthusiastically that he would be with him before nine the next morning.

Many distressing thoughts took possession of Sir Thomas as he lay in bed. He had made up his mind that he would in no way break the law, and he didn't know whether he had not broken it already by giving these people tobacco and wine. And yet it would have been impossible for him to have refused Mr. Trigger permission to order the supply. Even for the sake of the seat—even for the sake of his reputation, which was so much dearer to him than the seat—he could not have bidden guests, who had come to him in his own room, to go elsewhere if they required wine. It was a thing not to be done, and yet, for aught he knew, Mr. Trigger might continue to order food and wine, and beer and tobacco, to be supplied *ad libitum*, and whenever he chose. How was he to put an end to it, otherwise than by throwing up the game, and going back to London? That now would be gross ill-usage to the Conservatives of Percycross, who by such a step would be left in the lurch without a candidate. And then was it to be expected that he should live for a week with Mr. Trigger, with no other relief than that which would be afforded by Messrs. Pile, Spiveycomb, and Co.? Every thing about him was reeking of tobacco. And then, when he sat down to breakfast at nine o'clock, there would be Mr. Trigger!

The next morning he was out of bed at seven, and ordered his breakfast at eight sharp. He would steal a march on Trigger. He went out into the sitting-room, and there was Trigger already seated in the arm-chair, studying the list of the voters of Percycross! "Heavens, what a man!" "I thought I'd look in early, and they told me you were coming out, or I'd have just stepped into your room." Into his very bedroom! Sir Thomas shuddered as he heard the proposition. "We've a telegram from Griffenbottom," continued

Trigger, "and he won't be here till noon. We can't begin till he comes."

"Ah; then I can just write a few letters," said Sir Thomas.

"I wouldn't mind letters now if I was you. If you don't mind, we'll go and look up the parsons. There are four or five of 'em, and they like to be seen—not in the way of canvassing. They're all right, of course. And there's two of 'em won't leave a stone unturned in the outside hamlets. But they like to be seen, and their wives like it." Whereupon Mr. Trigger ordered breakfast—and ate it. Sir Thomas reminded himself that a fortnight was after all but a short duration of time. He might live through a fortnight—probably—and then, when Mr. Griffenbottom came, it would be shared between two.

At noon he returned to the Percy Standard, very tired, there to await the coming of Mr. Griffenbottom. Mr. Griffenbottom didn't come till three, and then bustled up into the sitting-room, which Sir Thomas had thought was his own, as though all Percycross belonged to him. During the last three hours supporters had been in and out continually, and Mr. Pabsby had made an ineffectual attempt or two to catch Sir Thomas alone. Trigger had been going up and down between the Standard and the station. Various men, friends and supporters of Griffenbottom and Underwood, had been brought to him. Who were paid agents, who were wealthy townsmen, who were canvassers and messengers, he did not know. There were bottles on the sideboard the whole time. Sir Thomas, in a speculative manner, endeavoring to realize to himself the individuality of this and that stranger, could only conceive that they who helped themselves were wealthy townsmen, and that they who waited till they were asked by others were paid canvassers and agents. But he knew nothing, and could only wish himself back in Southampton Buildings.

At last Mr. Griffenbottom, followed by a cloud of supporters, bustled into the room. Trigger at once introduced the two candidates. "Very glad to meet you," said Griffenbottom. "So we're going to fight this little battle together. I remember you in the House, you know, and I dare say you remember me. I'm used to this kind of thing. I suppose you ain't.—Well, Trigger, how are things looking? I suppose we'd better begin down Pump Lane. I know my way about the place, Honeywood, as well as if it was my bedroom. And so I ought, Trigger."

"I suppose you've seen the inside of pretty nearly every house in Percycross," said Trigger.

"There's some I don't want to see the inside of any more. I can tell you that. How are these new householders going to vote?"

"Betwixt and between, Mr. Griffenbottom."

"I never thought we should find much difference. It don't matter what rent a man pays, but what he does. I could tell you how nineteen out of twenty men here would vote, if you'd tell me what they did, and who they

were. What's to be done about talking to 'em?"

"To-morrow night we're to be in the Town Hall, Mr. Griffenbottom, and Thursday an open-air meeting, with a balcony in the market-place."

"All right. Come along. Are you good at spinning yarns to them, Honeywood?"

"I don't like it, if you mean that," said Sir Thomas.

"It's better than canvassing. By George, any thing is better than that. Come along. We may get Pump Lane, and Petticoat Yard, and those back alleys, done before dinner. You've got cards, of course, Trigger." And the old, accustomed electioneerer led the way out to his work.

Mr. Griffenbottom was a heavy, hale man, over sixty, somewhat inclined to be corpulent, with a red face, and a look of assured impudence about him which nothing could quell or diminish. The kind of life which he had led was one to which impudence was essentially necessary. He had done nothing for the world to justify him in assuming the airs of a great man—but still he could assume them, and many believed in him. He could boast neither birth, nor talent, nor wit—nor, indeed, wealth, in the ordinary sense of the word. Though he had worked hard all his life at the business to which he belonged, he was a poorer man now than he had been thirty years ago. It had all gone in procuring him a seat in Parliament. And he had so much sense that he never complained. He had known what it was that he wanted, and what it was that he must pay for it. He had paid for it, and had got it, and was, in his fashion, contented. If he could only have continued to have it without paying for it again, how great would have been the blessing! But he was a man who knew that such blessings were not to be expected. After the first feeling of disgust was over on the receipt of Trigger's letter, he put his collar to the work again, and was prepared to draw his purse—intending, of course, that the new candidate should bear as much as possible of this drain. He knew well that there was a prospect before him of abject misery—for life without Parliament would be such to him. There would be no salt left for him in the earth if he was ousted. And yet no man could say why he should have cared to sit in Parliament. He rarely spoke, and when he did no one listened to him. He was anxious for no political measures. He was a favorite with no section of a party. He spent all his evenings at the House, but it can hardly be imagined that those evenings were pleasantly spent. But he rubbed his shoulders against the shoulders of great men, and occasionally stood upon their staircases. At any rate, such as was the life, it was his life; and he had no time left to choose another. He considered himself on this occasion pretty nearly sure to be elected. He knew the borough, and was sure. But then there was that accursed system of petitioning, which according to his idea was un-English, ungentelemanlike, and unpatriotic—"A stand-up fight, and if

you're licked—take it." That was his idea of what an election should be.

Sir Thomas, who only just remembered the appearance of the man in the House, at once took an extravagant dislike to him. It was abominable to him to be called Underwood by a man who did not know him. It was nauseous to him to be forced into close relations with a man who seemed to him to be rough and ill-mannered. And, judging from what he saw, he gave his colleague credit for no good qualities. Now Mr. Griffenbottom had good qualities. He was possessed of pluck. He was in the main good-natured. And though he could resent an offence with ferocity, he could forgive an offence with ease. "Hit him hard, and then have an end of it!" That was Mr. Griffenbottom's mode of dealing with the offenders and the offences with which he came in contact.

In every house they entered Griffenbottom was at home, and Sir Thomas was a stranger of whom the inmates had barely heard the name. Griffenbottom was very good at canvassing the poorer classes. He said not a word to them about politics, but asked them all whether they didn't dislike that fellow Gladstone, who was one thing one day and another thing another day. "By G—, nobody knows what he is," swore Mr. Griffenbottom over and over again. The women mostly said that they didn't know, but they liked the blue. "Blues allays was gallanter nor the yellow," said one of 'em. They who expressed an opinion at all hoped that their husbands would vote for him "as 'd do most for 'em." "The big loaf—that's what we want," said one mother of many children, taking Sir Thomas by the hand. There were some who took advantage of the occasion to pour out their tales of daily griefs into the ears of their visitors. To these Griffenbottom was rather short and hard. "What we want, my dear, is your husband's vote and interest. We'll hear all the rest another time." Sir Thomas would have lingered and listened; but Griffenbottom knew that fourteen hundred voters had to be visited in ten days, and work as they would they could not see one hundred and forty a day. Trigger explained it all to Sir Thomas. "You can't work above seven hours, and you can't do twenty an hour. And much of the ground you must do twice over. If you stay to talk to them you might as well be in London. Mr. Griffenbottom understands it so well, you'd better keep your eye on him." There could be no object in the world on which Sir Thomas was less desirous of keeping his eye.

The men, who were much more difficult

to find than the women, had generally less to say for themselves. Most of them understood at once what was wanted, and promised. For it must be understood that on this their first day the conservative brigade was moving among its firm friends. In Petticoat Yard lived paper-makers in the employment of Mr. Spiveycomb, and in Pump Lane the majority of the inhabitants were employed by Mr. Spicer, of the mustard-works. The manufactories of both these men were visited, and there the voters were booked much quicker than at the rate of twenty an hour. Here and there a man would hold some peculiar opinion of his own. The Permissive Bill was asked for by an energetic teetotaler; and others, even in these Tory quarters, suggested the ballot. But they all—or nearly all of them—promised their votes. Now and again some sturdy fellow, seeming to be half ashamed of himself in opposing all those around him, would say shortly that he meant to vote for Mogga, and pass on. "You do—do you?" Sir Thomas heard Mr. Spicer say to one such man. "Yes, I does," said the man. Sir Thomas heard no more, but he felt how perilous was the position on which a candidate stood under the present law.

As regarded Sir Thomas himself, he felt, as the evening was coming on, that he had hardly done his share of the work. Mr. Griffenbottom had canvassed, and he had walked behind. Every now and then he had attempted a little conversation, but in that he had been immediately pulled up by the conscientious and energetic Mr. Trigger. As for asking for votes, he hardly knew, when he had been carried back into the main street through a labyrinth of alleys at the back of Petticoat Yard, whether he had asked any man for his vote or not. With the booking of the votes, he had, of course, nothing to do. There were three men with books—and three other men to open the doors, show the way, and make suggestions on the expediency of going hither or thither. Sir Thomas would always have been last in the procession, had there not been one silent, civil person, whose duty it seemed to be to bring up the rear. If ever Sir Thomas lingered behind to speak to a poor woman, there was this silent, civil person lingering too. The influence of the silent, civil person was so strong that Sir Thomas could not linger much.

As they came into the main street they encountered the opposition party, Mr. Westmacott, Ontario Mogga, and their supporters. "I'll introduce you," said Mr. Griffenbottom to his colleague. "Come along. It's the thing to do." Then they met in the middle of the way. Poor Ontario was hanging be-

hind, but holding up his head gallantly, and endeavoring to look as though he were equal to the occasion. Griffenbottom and Westmacott shook hands cordially, and complained with mutual sighs that household suffrage had made the work a deal harder than ever. "And I'm only a week up from the gout," said Griffenbottom. Then Sir Thomas and Westmacott were introduced, and at last Ontario was brought forward. He bowed and attempted to make a little speech; but nobody in one army or in the other seemed to care much for poor Ontario. He knew that it was so, but that mattered little to him. If he were destined to represent Percycross in Parliament, it must be by the free votes and unbiased political aspirations of the honest working-men of the borough. So remembering he stood aloof, stuck his hand into his breast, and held up his head something higher than before. Though the candidates had thus greeted each other at this chance meeting, the other parties in the contending armies had exhibited no courtesies.

The weariness of Sir Thomas when this first day's canvass was over, was so great that he was tempted to go to bed and ask for a bowl of gruel. Nothing kept him from doing so but amazement at the courage and endurance of Mr. Griffenbottom. "We could get at a few of those chaps who were at the works, if we went out at eight," said Griffenbottom. Trigger suggested that Mr. Griffenbottom would be very tired. Trigger himself was perhaps tired. "Oh, tired," said Griffenbottom; "a man has to be tired at this work." Sir Thomas perceived that Griffenbottom was at least ten years his senior, and that he was still almost lame from the gout. "You'll be ready, Underwood?" said Griffenbottom. Sir Thomas felt himself bound to undertake whatever might be thought necessary. "If we were at it day and night, it wouldn't be too much," said Griffenbottom, as he prepared to amuse himself with one of the poll-books till dinner should be on the table. "Didn't we see Jacob Pucky?" asked the energetic candidate, observing that the man's name wasn't marked. "To be sure we did. I was speaking to him myself. He was one of those who didn't know till the day came. We know what that means; eh, Honeywood?" Sir Thomas wasn't quite sure that he did know; but he presumed that it meant something dishonest. Again Mr. Trigger dined with them, and as soon as ever their dinner was swallowed they were out again at their work, Sir Thomas being dragged from door to door, while Griffenbottom asked for the votes.

And this was to last yet for ten days more!

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